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# GERMAN CHEMICAL WARFARE ACTIVITIES PARIS AREA



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COMBINED INTELLIGENCE OBJECTIVES  
SUB-COMMITTEE





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GERMAN CHEMICAL WARFARE ACTIVITIES IN THE PARIS AREA

7 September 1944

Reported By

Dr. A.W. BEESTON  
Captain L.C. CROSS  
Major J.E. DRIVER

CIOS Black List Item Number 8  
Chemical Warfare

COMBINED INTELLIGENCE OBJECTIVES SUB-COMMITTEE  
G-2 Division, SHAEF (Rear), APO 413

/// Allied Forces, Supreme Headquarters



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Personnel of Team

Dr. A.W. BEESTON  
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Major J.E. DRIVER

SECRET

## GERMAN CHEMICAL WARFARE ACTIVITIES IN THE PARIS AREA

SUMMARY

There is no evidence of any offensive CW work (research or manufacture) having been carried out in France subsequent to the capitulation, or of the Germans having required the French to do any such work. Indeed, the Germans forbade work of this kind, and never gave the French any indication of their own activities.

The German interest in French CW centered on DM and the Engin-Z, and to a less extent on mustard gas and arsine.

INFORMATION OBTAINED1. Poudrerie Nationale du Bouchet

The present head of this establishment is Ingenieur-en-Chef des Poudres, M. KOVACHE. With him are associated the following:-

M. PRAT	- Organic Chemist
M. AVY	- Analytical Chemist
M. RENAUD	- Chemist
M. ANDRE	- Chemist
M. TICHERONELLE	- Analytical Chemist
M. GAVAUDIN	- Physiologist.

The late Director of the Bacteriological Laboratory, M. VELU, is reported to have retired, and has certainly not been replaced since his laboratory was closed in 1940. M. MAYNE, formerly Director of the Physiology Laboratory, is also retired and believed to be in NORMANDY. M. TAUZIN, who formerly worked on particulate clouds, is in VENDRES.

With the German advance in 1940, the staff of Le Bouchet with some equipment and the records (except the British records which are said to have been destroyed previously) were evacuated to MONTPELLIER. After a short time the records were moved to TOULOUSE. After the capitulation of France the laboratories remained closed until the spring of 1941, when M. KOVACHE with some of the staff were ordered by VICHY to return to LE BOUCHET. (copy of authority at Appendix 'A'). Apparently the Germans had bargained with the French General Staff to allow the use



of these laboratories on condition that no work of military significance was undertaken, and that in exchange the Germans should have full access to the records at TOULOUSE.

The Germans carried out an inspection of LE BOUCHET and removed certain portions of the pilot plant and other equipment to a total value of 30,000,000 fr. In particular the greater part of the DM plant and considerable portions of the ethylene chloride mustard gas plant were taken. The lewisite plant was left virtually intact. Toxic materials were disposed of under German orders, and all buildings from which plant was removed were sealed.

The experimental station as a whole has an appearance of neglect. On our arrival the buildings of the pilot plant, certain laboratories, and portions of the large gas chamber were still sealed. Some of the seals were broken in our presence. Many store rooms and laboratories had obviously not been in use for a long time. The work at present being carried out is as follows:-

Preparation and testing of organic fungicides.  
Industrial gas hazards (e.g. lead dust poisoning).

Paper and soap substitutes.

A little pure chemical and physiological research (e.g. analysis of halogenated ketones, and study of plant poisons).

Analytical work in the pre-existing explosives branch (unconnected with CW and therefore outside our terms of reference).

When KOVACHE returned to LE BOUCHET, the station was visited by a German delegation headed by Col. Von SICHERER and including a Dr. STANDIEN (believed to be a very important person) and Dr. RITTLER, who examined the establishment's records and interrogated various members of the staff in some detail. The German interest was obviously along these lines: - DM and the Engin-Z; mustard gas; arsine (up to the end of 1942). The Germans were also interested in T.773, and M. KOVACHE gained the impression that they were making it. After this there was no direct contact with the Germans until 1943, when Von SICHERER returned and examined the DM records.

Some time in 1942/43, the Germans set up a laboratory, under Dr. JACQUET (since deceased), which was quite apart from the CW organization and directed under German supervision. This laboratory is believed to have been working on proknocks, and cursory examination of it indicated elementary work of this kind.



## 2. Laboratoire Centrale des Industries Chimiques.

The director is M. DESMAROUX, with M. DEMOUGIN, M. MATHIEU, and M. CHEDIN as immediate assistants.

Information from DESMAROUX agreed in general with that from KOVACHE.

DESMAROUX gained the impression from his conversations in 1940 that the immediate German worry was the possible use by British aircraft spray and DM clouds against their intended invasion. When the French records became available, they were examined and copied in minute detail by a German delegation consisting of some 30 - 40 scientists of various sorts. This delegation also interrogated the various workers at LE BOUCHET, but always with DESMAROUX excluded from the interrogation.

The impression gained was that the Germans were always afraid of the use of gas but that, towards the end of the occupation, this fear was centered upon the possible use of gas by the Russians whom they considered to be the best protected.

Furthermore, towards the end, DESMAROUX gained the impression that the Germans believed that the Americans and Russians would use gas against them but that the British were reluctant to institute gas warfare. It is perhaps significant that near the end of the occupation the Germans asked if a factory at ST JACQUES, formerly making active charcoal, could be put into full operation: it never was.

While the French were not worried by the deposition of sulphur from mustard gas made by their process, the Germans would not use this product because they considered that such deposition in weapons under storage would render them ballistically unstable. In consequence, they were not interested in stocks of French mustard gas, and M. DESMAROUX believes that they ordered destruction of all stocks.

It was also suggested at the time of the visit in 1943 that the Germans took control of the SASIGNY arsenic mines. Such requisitioning of arsenic is borne out by other information.

The following information on the recent activities of plants where CW production had been contemplated by the French Government was disclosed by M. DESMAROUX and confirmed by M. KOVACHE and MOREAU:-



ANGOULEME - Making HE, but no gas  
 BERGERAC - Making HE, but no gas  
 SOUSSENS - Understood to be a large  
 plant for DM and lewisite,  
 but was not completed  
 before the capitulation.

### 3. Direction des Industries Chimiques

The Director is M. Ingenieur-en-Chef MOREAU.  
 Ing.Gen. ROUGIER and M. ROBIN are also located there.

We were informed by other interested parties who had interviewed M. MOREAU that this information was in entire agreement with that already given by M. DES-MAROUX and KOVACHE. He added that about a year ago the Germans started buying up large quantities of chlorine to supplement their own production which was seriously limited by shortage of salt.

M. ROUGHIER confirmed that the Germans had for some time been obtaining arsenious oxide from France.

### 4. Institute Pasteur

Present personalities are:-

Director:	Trefouel	
V. Director:	Noel Bernard	
Chiefs of Departments:	Bocquet	- Animal Tuberculosis
	Negre	- Human Tuberculosis
	Legroua	- Bacteri- ology
	Lepine	- Viruses
	Macheboeuf	- Biochem- istry
	Dujarric	- Hygiene
	Martin	- Hospital
	Ramon	- Sera
	Ginoud	- Typhus
	Wollmann	- Bacteri- ophage

of these we saw M. MACHEBOEUF and M. BOCQUET, and also M. BERTRAND (formerly Head of the Department of Biochemistry) and other members of the Staff.

We were informed, and from our inspection do not doubt, that no work of CW or BW interest has been under-



taken at the Institute, nor do there appear to have been any discussions with the Germans on these matters.

The only work the Institute was called upon by the Germans to perform was the preparation of certain vaccines and sera for medical use. They fought a stiff rearguard action on this, and nothing like the full working capacity of the Institute was ever made available.

5. Et Kuhlmann, near Creil

We reached this factory 36 hours after the Germans had left, and found it at a standstill.

In the absence of the Director we interview the Chief Engineer of the Dyestuffs Plant, and a number of employees.

They informed us that the phosgene and CW arsenicals plant had not been worked since the capitulation. During the German occupation the factory was engaged on production of dyes, plastics and intermediates (including phthalic anhydride), pharmaceuticals, and small quantities of chlorine for internal use. The small stock of arsenious oxide remaining after the capitulation had been converted into fungicides.

7 September 1944

A.W. BEESTON  
L.C. CROSS, Capt., G.S.  
J.E. DRIVER, Major G.S.



MINISTERE DE LA PRODUCTION  
INDUSTRIELLE et du TRAVAIL

Le MONT DORE, le 1er Aout 1940

Direction des Industries Chimiques

n° 02/P

Le MINISTRE DE LA PRODUCTION INDUSTRIELLE  
et du TRAVAIL

a. M. KOVACHE, Directeur de la Poudrerie du  
BOUCHET (S-et-O)

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaitre que le Corps des Ingenieurs Militaires des Poudres dont vous faisiez partie comme Ingenieur en Chef de 1ere Classe ayant ete dissous par decret du 31 Juillet 1940, dont ei-joint une copie certifice conforme, vous etes a la date de ce decret, rendu a la vie civile.

Vous trouverez ci-joint un ordre de mission pour vous rendre a la Poudrerie du BOUCHET, dont vous assurerez la direction, dans le but notamment:

- 1°/ d'assurer le paiement des salaires et trai ements du personnel reste sur place ou reintegre;
- 2°/ d'organizer la surveillance et la securite de l'Establissement;
- 3°/ d'assurer la mise en ordre at le maintien on bon etat des installations;
- 4°/ d'assurer la liquidation des marches on cours.

Le Directeur des Industries Chimiques  
signe: BLANCHARD.

Copie conforme  
28 Aout 1944



MINISTERE de la PRODUCTION  
INDUSTRIELLE et du TRAVAIL

---

Direction des Industries  
Chimiques.

ORDRE DE MISSION

Par ordre de: Ministere de la Production Industrielle  
et du Travail

Il est enjoint a M. KOVACHE, Adolphe, Auguste,  
Charles

ne le 4 Fevrier 1892 a PONT-a-MOUSSON (Meurthe et  
Moselle), exerçant la profession de Directeur de  
la Poudrerie du BOUCHET.

Titulaire de la piece d'identite: Carte du Com-  
battent n° 8046 accompagne de:  
de se rendre au BOUCHET (Seine-et-Oise) en mission  
de service.

Les interesses utiliseront la voiture automo-  
bile n° 71.039 V N 15.

Les autorites francaises prient les autorites  
allemandes d'accorder aide et protection aux per-  
sonnes ci-dessus et de faciliter leur circulation  
dan la zone occupee.

Fait a VICHY, le 1er Aout 1940

Le Secretaire General a la Production et au Commerce  
Interieur  
signe : .....

Copie conforme  
28 Aout 1944.















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